

# 1AD<sup>unit</sup> lights up Putlos

## 1-4 ADA fires together for first time in three years

Story and photos by  
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For the first time in three years, the entire 1st Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery participated in a live-fire exercise in Putlos, near the North Sea, Sep. 2-14.

Soldiers from every battery practiced their air defense skills on Remote Control Maneuverable Aerial Targets, 1/5th Scale Aerial Targets and Ballistic Aerial Target Systems. "Firing as a battalion was a valuable training experience, particularly since they were able to fire live Stinger missiles. This was a big moral booster to go out and shoot that big missile," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bobby J. Brown, 1-4 ADA.

"We were able to take the training they did back in the rear and transfer it from the blackboard to a real field environment," said Sgt. Michael Dixon, an Avenger Weapons System team chief, Battery D, 1-4 ADA. "Both of my gunners, for their first time shooting, got direct hits," said Dixon.

Training with real Stinger missiles had an impact on the soldiers who

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1st Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery.

fired them. "[I] liked being able to fire the missiles for real, instead of just doing crew drills. It felt different actually firing it in a combat situation." Said Pfc. Derrick Ransome, an Avenger Weapon System gunner assigned to Battery D.

"We are going through all types of training, doing a live fire now makes me feel more confident going down to Kosovo," said Ransome.

The training was part of the preparation for Ransome and the rest of the 1st Platoon, Battery D who will deploy to Kosovo as part of the 1st Armored Division second rotation. "We're getting familiar with the weapon systems," said Pvt. Sean Richardson, a man-portable air defense system or MANPAD (shoulder-fired Stinger missile) gunner attached to Battery D for the Kosovo mission. "When we're in Kosovo we're going to be doing a peace-keeping mission, [but] it's good to have the field training in case we do have to use these weapon systems," said Richardson.

In addition to firing the Stinger missiles from the Avenger and MANPAD weapons systems, the gunners on the Avengers were able to engage targets with M3P .50 caliber machine guns. While many of the gunners did well, one of the best was also the youngest and least experienced. Pvt. Jason Lee Trowbridge was able to engage and destroy a 1/5th scale aerial target using the machine gun mounted on the Avenger.

The target was a scaled model of an SU-25 Frogfoot which is the Russian equivalent of our United States Air Force A-10 Tank Killer which was used extensively during Desert Storm. The 1/5th scale aerial targets are equipped with magnetic sensors that generate a magnetic field the size of the full-scale plane. When rounds pass through that field they are detected and scored as "hits". The gunners score points for each hit.

Trowbridge, age 17, just recently graduated advanced individual training.



Pvt. Sean Richardson, Battery B, 1-4 ADA, receives instructions from his team chief on the MANPAD, a shoulder fired Stinger missile system.



Pvt. Jason Lee Trowbridge, a gunner from Battery D, and Spc. Robert M. Perez, his Team Chief, display a 1/5th scale aerial target he shot down using the MP3 .50 cal. machinegun on his Avenger Weapon System.

He joined the unit, his first assignment, July 3. Trowbridge not only scored "hits", but managed to be the only soldier in the battalion to completely blow the little plane out of the sky, earning him an expert rating.

Trowbridge said he joined the Army to "blow stuff up." He trained during the Avenger Situational Training Exercise and on the Avenger simulator system, but attributes his skills to the fact that he has been "shooting guns all my life and playing video games," in his hometown of Gulfport, Miss.

The 1st Platoon, Battery D, 1-4 ADA soldiers will continue training until December when they leave for Kosovo to replace 4th Platoon, Battery D soldiers who are deployed there now.

"We gained a lot of confidence in this gunnery. If we had to deploy the battalion into a conflict situation, we could pull it off without a hitch," said Brown.



Jay Levine displays a 1/5th Scale Aerial Target, the aircraft he pilots via a remote-control device.

## Civilian flies against Army air defense

Story by Spc. Joe Thompson  
Photo by Spc. Michael J. McHugh  
1st Armored Division PAO

PUTLOS, Germany—Jay Levine has been flying against Army Air Defense teams for five years, not as an enemy pilot, but flying 1/5th scale aerial targets. The miniature remote controlled airplanes buzz around the air defense gunnery range, as soldiers try to shoot them down using various types of air defense weaponry, at the German training area in Putlos, Germany.

"Most of the people that see us flying these aircraft think of them as toys, but they really should be thought of as targets. They can be configured for many different firing systems, and depending upon the criteria of a mission, they can even be configured to fly at night," said Mr. Levine, a pilot, builder, and mechanic with Continental Remote Piloted Vehicle Systems (RPVS).

Mr. Levine learned his flying skills as a recreational model plane pilot, and he also flew the smaller Remote Controlled Miniature Aerial Targets when he was in the Army.

"Back when I was serving in the Air Defense Artillery, they needed someone to fly the RCMATs, the 1/9th scale aerial targets, during the gunneries. Since I flew model aircraft before I was in the Army, I was a logical choice."

Levine has been flying ever since his Army days. Continental RPVS flies their miniature aircraft against all the services, and they go wherever the soldiers train.

"I love this job. I get the chance to help the soldiers train while doing what I love. You can't beat that."

(Background) Pfc. Derrick Ransome, a gunner with Battery D, 1-4 ADA, fires a missile from an Avenger Weapons System at a Ballistic Aerial Target.